

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAB-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 IO-10

EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02 SR-02

ORM-01 AID-05 /096 W

----- 016369

R 021330Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1428

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 JIDDA 3938

BEIRUT ALSO PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF

SUBJECT: SECRETARY GENERAL OF ISLAMIC SECRETARIAT SAYS ISLAMIC  
FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING TO CONSIDER SOLUTION TO JERUSALEM  
PROBLEM

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SUMMARY:

SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ISLAMIC SECRETARIAT HASSAN TUHAMY TOLD THE AMBASSADOR MAY 27 THAT THE ISSUE OF JERUSALEM WOULD FIGURE PROMINENTLY AT THE MUSLIM FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN JIDDA JULY 12. HE INTENDS TO PRESENT A NON-POLITICAL PLAN FOR THE SOLUTION OF THE JERUSALEM QUESTION WHICH IS DESIGNED TO SEPARATE IT FROM THE CURRENT MIDDLE EAST STALEMATE AND KEEP IT OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE RUSSIANS AT GENEVA. THE GIST OF HIS PROPOSAL IS THE TURNING OVER OF THE OLD CITY TO AN ADMINISTRATION OF THE THREE RELIGIONS. ALL RELATED QUESTIONS--NEW JERUSALEM, NEW SETTLEMENTS ETC.--WERE TO BE CONSIDERED POLITICAL AND LEFT TO THE PEACE NEGOTIATORS, BUT "OF COURSE" THE FORMER ARAB LANDS WOULD HAVE TO BE RETURNED TO THE ARABS. TUHAMY SAID THAT HIS PLAN WOULD WIN THE SOLID SUPPORT OF THE ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS AND WOULD THEREAFTER HAVE CHRISTIAN BACKING. THE ISRAELIS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO RESIST THIS COMBINATION. TUHAMY'S IDEAS ON JERUSALEM STRIKE US AS QUIXOTIC. HOWEVER, HE CLAIMS TO HAVE DISCUSSED THEM WITH A NUMBER OF THE LEADERS OF ISLAMIC COUNTRIES AND SEEMS CONFIDENT OF THEIR SUPPORT AT THE FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE. WE CANNOT JUDGE THE DEGREE OF SUPPORT THEY LIKELY TO GET BUT THINK TUHAMY'S IDEAS ARE CERTAIN TO BE CONSIDERED AND THEREFORE REPORT THEM AT SOME LENGTH. END SUMMARY.

1. ON MAY 27 THE AMBASSADOR HAD A LENGTHY CONVERSATION WITH HASSAN TUHAMY, SEC GEN OF THE ISLAMIC SECRETARIAT HEADQUARTERED IN JIDDA. THE CONVERSATION RANGED OVER A NUMBER OF SUBJECTS BUT CONCENTRATED PARTICULARLY ON JERUSALEM AND TUHAMY'S PLANS TO HAVE THE MATTER TAKEN UP AND A "SOLUTION" AGREED TO AT THE ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING TO CONVENE IN JIDDA JUNE 12.

2. TUHAMY SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF JERUSALEM WAS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT ASPECTS OF THE WHOLE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM AND AS SUCH TENDED TO INHIBIT PROGRESS TOWARDS A SOLUTION. AT THE SAME TIME, PROSPECTS WERE DIM THAT THERE WOULD BE RAPID PROGRESS ON OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM, WHICH MEANT THAT IT WOULD BE A LONG TIME AT BEST BEFORE  
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JERUSALEM--WHICH EVERYONE SEEMED CONTENT TO LEAVE TIL LAST--WAS ADDRESSED. IN THE MEANTIME THE PRESENT UNSATISFACTORY SITUATION WOULD GET WORSE AS THE ISRAELIS CONTINUED TO "CREATE FACTS" IN AND AROUND JERUSALEM. GIVING PARTICULAR URGENCY WAS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE MIGHT SOON BE CONVENED. THIS WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF OPENING THE QUESTION OF JERUSALEM TO THE COMMUNISTS, AN ISSUE IN WHICH THEY HAD NOT YET BEEN INVOLVED AND IN WHICH THEY HAD NO BUSINESS.

3. TUHAMY SAID THAT HE HAD THEREFORE REACHED THE CONCLUSION THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO DIVORCE THE QUESTION OF JERUSALEM COMPLETELY FROM POLITICAL EFFORTS TO SOLVE THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM AND TO FIND A "NON-POLITICAL" AND ESSENTIALLY RELIGIOUS SOLUTION NOW. HE SAID THAT HE INTENDED TO PUT FORWARD SUCH A SOLUTION AT THE ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE AND THAT HE EXPECTED IT TO BE UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED. TUHAMY SAID THAT THE SOLUTION WHICH WOULD BE PUT TO THE CONFERENCE WAS STILL BEING VERY CLOSELY HELD BUT THAT HIS SOUNDINGS INDICATED THAT HIS APPROACH WOULD FIND COMPLETE ACCEPTANCE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 JIDDA 3938

BEIRUT ALSO PASS BAGHDAD

4. TUHAMY WAS SOMEWHAT VAGUE IN REPLYING TO QUESTIONS AS TO THE SPECIFICS OF HIS PROPOSAL. IT APPEARS, HOWEVER, THAT THE ESSENCE OF HIS PLAN IS TO TURN THE OLD CITY, THE HOLY CITY, INTO AN ENTITY RUN JOINTLY BY THE THREE RELIGIONS. HE SAID THAT THE FUTURE OF NEW JERUSALEM AND OF THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE TERRITORIES ANNEXED TO JERUSALEM AFTER THE 1967 WAR WAS A POLITICAL QUESTION WITH WHICH HE DID NOT INTEND TO DEAL, BUT "OF COURSE" THE  
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LAND, ALONG WITH ALL THE OTHER LAND TAKEN BY ISRAEL IN 1967 WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE TO BE RELINQUISHED BY ISRAEL.

5. THE AMBASSADOR THEN INQUIRED ABOUT THE MATTERS OF SOVEREIGNTY AND CIVIL ADMINISTRATION IN THE OLD CITY. DID TUHAMY MEAN THAT EACH OF THE THREE RELIGIONS WOULD ADMINISTER ITS OWN HOLY PLACES AND THAT CIVIL ADMINISTRATION OF THE OLD CITY MIGHT STILL BE LEFT TO THE ISRAELIS? TUHAMY WAS EMPHATICALLY NEGATIVE ON THIS POINT. THE CITY WAS TO BE GOVERNED IN ALL MATTERS BY THE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES. TO PERMIT ISRAELI CIVIL ADMINISTRATION TO REMAIN WOULD MEAN THAT JERUSALEM WOULD REMAIN A FACTOR IN THE MIDDLE EAST POLITICAL EQUATION. HIS AIM WAS TO REMOVE IT FROM POLITICS. HE COMMENTED THAT AS A RESULT OF THIS KIND OF SOLUTION THE JEWISH POPULATION OF OLD JERUSALEM MIGHT ACTUALLY INCREASE. HE WAS UNPERTURBED WHEN IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT THE ISRAELIS, WHO PRESENTLY CONTROL ALL OF JERUSALEM, MIGHT NOT FIND THIS SOLUTION VERY ATTRACTIVE.

6. TUHAMY SAID THAT TO DATE THE ISLAMIC COUNTRIES HAD GIVEN RELATIVELY LITTLE SUPPORT TO THE ARABS IN THEIR CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL. THIS SITUATION--WHICH WAS IN ANY CASE CHANGING AS A RESULT OF NEW ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REALITIES--WAS UNDERSTANDABLE: THOSE COUNTRIES HAD ENOUGH POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF THEIR OWN WITHOUT TAKING ON SOMEONE ELSE'S. HIS PROPOSAL, HOWEVER, WOULD CHANGE ALL THAT. HE WOULD BE DISCUSSING JERUSALEM ONLY IN A RELIGIOUS SENSE, COMPLETELY DIVORCED FROM POLITICS. THIS WAS AN ISSUE AROUND WHICH ALL THE MUSLIM PEOPLES WOULD RALLY.

7. THE AMBASSADOR INQUIRED WHETHER TUHAMY HAD OBTAINED SUPPORT FOR HIS PROPOSAL. TUHAMY REPLIED THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED SAUDI/JERUSALEM WITH KING FAISAL AT SOME LENGTH AND JUST A FEW DAYS BEFORE HIS DEATH HAD FIRST PRESENTED TO HIM HIS PROPOSAL AND OBTAINED THE LATE KING'S APPROVAL. TUHAMY SAID THAT HE FOUND THAT THE NEW RULERS LACKED FAISAL'S FEEL

FOR THE SUBJECT OF JERUSALEM BUT THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT OF  
THEIR SUPPORT ALSO. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT TUHAMY SPOKE  
OF A CITY GOVERNED BY THE THREE RELIGIONS; HAD HE DIS-  
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CUSSED THIS WITH JEWISH OR CHRISTIAN LEADERS? TUHAMY  
GAVE A YES/NO SORT OF ANSWER. HE WAS IN TOUCH WITH HIGH  
VATICAN OFFICIALS AND HAD DISCUSSED JERUSALEM  
WITH THEM. HE HAD FOUND THEIR RELIGIOUS FEELING FOR JER-  
USALEM AKIN TO HIS OWN AND WAS SURE THAT ONCE SOLID ISLAMIC  
SUPPORT HAD BEEN OBTAINED THAT THE VATICAN ALSO WOULD  
GIVE ITS ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT. (THE AMBASSADOR AT THIS POINT  
NOTED HIS SURPRISE THAT THE SUBJECT OF JERUSALEM HAD  
NOT COME UP DURING THE PRECEDENT SETTING VISIT OF A HIGH-  
RANKING VATICAN CARDINAL TO SAUDI ARABIA SOME MONTHS AGO.  
TUHAMY SAID THAT WHILE THE VATICAN HAD BEEN EAGER TO DIS-  
CUSS THE SUBJECT, KING FAISAL HAD REFUSED. (COMMENT: WE  
HAD UNDERSTOOD EXACTLY THE COUNTRARY) HE FELT THAT THE  
TIME WAS NOT YET RIPE; THE MUSLIM WORLD WOULD NOT HAVE  
UNDERSTOOD HIS TALKING ABOUT JERUSALEM WITH A CHRISTIAN  
LEADER WHILE THE MUSLIMS WERE NOT YET UNITED ON THE SUB-  
JECT.)

8. TUHAMY SAID THAT HE HAD HAD CONSIDERABLY LESS CON-  
TACT WITH PROTESTANT LEADERS. HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH  
THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES WITH EUROPEAN JEWISH LEADERS  
WHO HAD INDICATED THEIR REPUGNANCE FOR THE IRRELIGIOUSNESS  
OF THE ISRAELI STATE AND THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT AND WHO HE  
FELT COULD SWING CONSIDERABLE EUROPEAN JEWISH SUPPORT  
BEHIND THE IDEA OF A RELIGIOUS, NON-POLITICAL, JERUSALEM.

9. COMMENT: IN DISCUSSING JERUSALEM TUHAMY WAS CALM, CONFI-  
DENT AND QUITE APOLITICAL. IN DISCUSSING OTHER ASPECTS OF  
THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION TUHAMY SHOWED HIMSELF TO HAVE A  
STRONG SENSE OF POLITICS--AND TO BE VERY EGYPTIAN. FOR  
INSTANCE, WHEN HE RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF A PALESTINIAN  
STATE ON THE WEST BANK AND GAZA THE AMBASSADOR MENTIONED  
THAT HE HAD HEARD OF A PROPOSAL WHEREBY EGYPT WOULD CEDE  
TO THE PALESTINIANS OF GAZA A SMALL STRIP OF SINAI DESERT  
TO EASE THE POPULATION PRESSURE THERE. TUHAMY SAID THAT  
HE KNEW PRESIDENT SADAT WELL AND THAT HE FELT AS HE DID  
AND WOULD NOT CEDE AN INCH OF EGYPTIAN TERRITORY. THE  
LAND MIGHT ONLY BE SAND, "BUT SAND IS TO BURY PALESTINIANS  
IN NOT TO GIVE THEM."  
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**To:** STATE  
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